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In this edition...

In this edition we catch up on new technology in use underground, report on progress with the Grand Junction Refinery Building, and remind people about the unique opportunity to walk along the conveyor belt route from the open pit to the process plant as part of the ECHO Walking Festival.

SEEING THE LIGHT

Staff working underground now have new cap lamps. They battery is much lighter, and the bulbs are LEDs, which should make them more robust. The big change, however, is something you can't see.

Each cap lamp contains a microchip programmed with the underground worker's name. As each person enters or leaves the portal a scanner automatically records the event. This digital real time data is operated in tandem with the traditional tag board and provides us with an additional record of who is underground. Staff must still tag on and tag off as they always have. In the event of a power outage the physical tag board will still provide a record of who is working underground.

The electronic system does something the physical tag board cannot do.

Large underground machinery is fitted sensors that detect the microchip in the cap lamps. Each machine has a monitor that displays the immediate location of each person within an 80-100 metre radius, and their name. This means that as a truck or loader moves around the mine the driver is aware of who is close by.

Not only do the new cap lamps help the wearers 'see the light', they also let others know where they are. This technology contributes to a safer workplace.



Each new cap lamp is individually programmed with the name of its wearer.

Turning up the volume

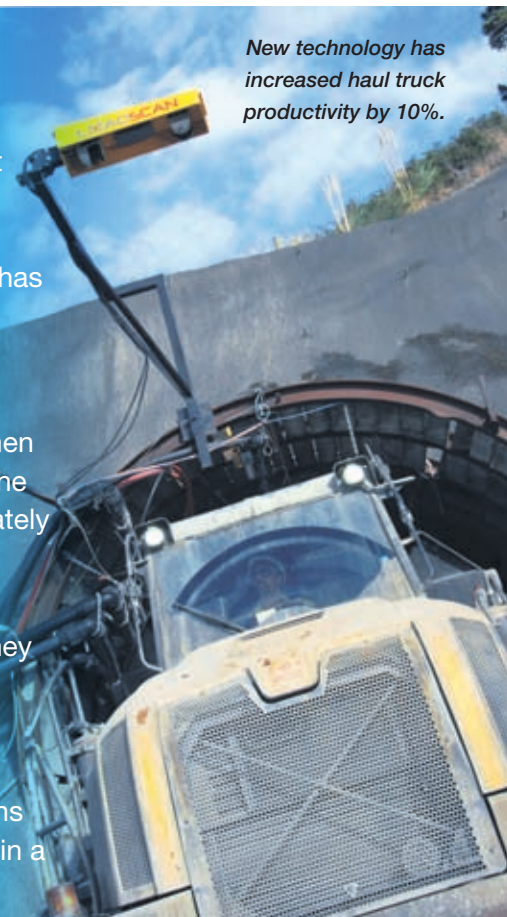
Each underground truck can haul about 20 tonnes of ore or waste from underground to the surface. Until now it has not been possible to accurately measure how much each truck hauls out through the portal. The introduction of new technology has changed this. A Loadscan volume scanner has been installed above the portal. This gives drivers real-time feedback on the volume of their load.

Each truck has a tag that can be read by the scanner. The trucks are scanned when empty to give a tub profile, and then scanned again when they have a full load. Information on the volume and estimated tonnage of each pay load is immediately visible to the truck drivers on a display screen at the portal.

Underground manager Charlie Gawith says that the system gives truck operators an immediate indication of whether they are being fully loaded underground.

'Using this system we have been able to move 10 per cent more material for the same cost. This increase in total movement in a year is a huge increase in efficiency. It means trucking costs are effectively being reduced by 10 per cent in a year and that is significant.'

New technology has increased haul truck productivity by 10%.



The conveyor belt walk on Sunday will provide unique views.

Walking the walk

For the last few years Newmont Waihi Gold has conducted public tours along the conveyor belt route from the open pit, under Union Hill to the

Process Plant as part of the ECHO Walking Festival. This moderate walk takes about an hour and a half and offers unique views, the chance to view mining operations close up, and a walk into history in the tunnel under Union Hill.

This walk can only be conducted on a Sunday, as this is the day that the conveyor does not operate. Participants need to wear sturdy enclosed shoes. We provide a hard hat, hi viz vest and safety glasses. The section of the walk under Union Hill is quite steep and is not recommended for very young children.

The 2013 tour is this Sunday. Last minute bookings should be made with Brian Gentil at GO Waihi, phone 863 3030.

She's looking pretty refined now



The Grand Junction refinery Building after its move.



Looking so refined: new roof, skylights and louvres.



The Grand Junction Refinery Building was moved to its present location next to the Pit Rim Walkway in 2010. The consent conditions for its

relocation included replacing the roof and making the building weather tight. A new roof is now in place, along with a complete new set of the louvres that give the building its unique look. New window bars in the same style as the original items have been fabricated to replace those that are missing, and currently new doors are being made based on images from old photographs. You can view the results on the walkway.

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